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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the Earth belongs to You and everything in it. Thank You for continuing to bless our lives. Give our lawmakers absolute trust in Your faithfulness and power. May the unfolding of Your loving providence in our history inspire them to persevere. Lord, fill them with Your Spirit, guiding their words and helping them to avoid risky rhetoric. Tune their hearts to the frequency of Your inner voice, making them responsible stewards of freedom.

Lord, thank You for blessing the United States of America throughout our history. Continue to unite us in the common cause of justice, righteousness, and truth.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, some questioned whether Washington

could ever agree on a replacement for No Child Left Behind. They needn't question any longer. Just consider today's headline from the Associated Press: "Outdated education law up for major makeover in the Senate."

This morning we expect that a new Senate that is back to work will send the Every Student Succeeds Act to the President for his signature. This forward-looking replacement for a broken law would open new opportunities for our kids and put education back in the hands of those who understand their needs best: parents, teachers, States, and school boards.

This bipartisan legislation would strengthen charter schools. This bipartisan legislation would prevent distant bureaucrats from imposing common core. This bipartisan legislation would substitute one-size-fits-all Federal mandates for greater State and local flexibility. In short, it is conservative reform designed to help students succeed, instead of helping Washington grow. It is a significant achievement for our country.

I thank everyone who helped make this moment possible. At the top of the list are two Senators. There is Senator ALEXANDER, a former Education Secretary from Tennessee, a Republican; and there is Senator MURRAY, a former preschool teacher from Washington State, a Democrat. They worked very hard. They worked across the aisle, and they worked in good faith.

Their success in this effort is our country's gain. It is a win for parents, and it is a win for dedicated teachers. Most importantly, it is a win for children because these young Americans deserve the enhanced opportunities the bill would provide.

There is something else we know about Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY about their accomplishment. It is a testament to what a new and more open approach can bring to the legislative process. It gives Senators of both parties more of a say. It gives

Senators of both parties more of a stake. So Senators are more likely to be interested in working together and seeing good ideas through to completion. That is just what we have seen here.

Senator MURRAY said: "I am very proud of the bipartisan work we have done on the Senate floor—debating amendments, taking votes, and making this good bill even better."

Senator ALEXANDER said: "The bill is just one more example that Congress is back to work."

I couldn't agree more. Finding a serious replacement for No Child Left Behind eluded Washington for years. Today it will become another bipartisan achievement for our country.

I urge every colleague to join me in voting to send this forward-looking, conservative reform to the President's desk. Let's help every student by passing a bill NPR calls a "sea change in the federal approach" and the Wall Street Journal hails as "the largest devolution of federal control to the states in a quarter-century."

BIPARTISAN ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the new Congress and the new Senate this year have had a habit this year of turning third rails into bipartisan achievements. You might say we did so on highways and transportation last week. You might say we are doing so on schools and education this week.

We have also overcome significant obstacles to pass important legislation that would protect America's privacy online through the sharing of cyber threat information that would help fight against unfair trade barriers, that would help our military modernize and prepare for future threats, and that would bring hope to victims of deplorable crimes who suffer in the shadows.

But when it comes to the truest of third rails in American politics, some boil that down to just two phrases:

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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